DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 463 533 CS 510 859

AUTHOR	Moore, Paula; Lysy, Daria C.; Bamford, Rosemary; Cook, Laura
TITLE	A Look at Reading Recovery Programs in Maine Schools: A Supplement to the State of Maine Reading Recovery Report and Evaluation, 1997-1998.
INSTITUTION	Maine Univ., Orono. Center for Early Literacy.
SPONS AGENCY	Maine State Dept. of Education, Augusta.
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	30p.
AVAILABLE FROM	University of Maine, College of Education & Human Development, 5766 Shibles Hall, Orono, ME 04469-5766. Tel: 207-581-2438; Fax: 207-581-2423; Web site: http://www.ume.maine.edu/~cel.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Data Collection; Early Intervention; Grade 1; High Risk Students; *Literacy; Outcomes of Education; Primary Education; *Program Implementation; Public Schools; Questionnaires; *Reading Programs; Remedial Programs; *State Programs; Student Educational Objectives; *Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS	*Maine; *Reading Recovery Projects

ABSTRACT

In an effort to discover how Maine schools are operating their Reading Recovery (RR) programs, Maine Reading Recovery teachers provided information related to school-level implementation. Although completion of the Maine data forms was optional, three-fourths of the 346 Maine RR teachers completed the forms. Two types of implementation data were collected: teacher data (questionnaires) and student data (questionnaires about RR students completed by teachers). This report presents the information collected on the Maine data forms and infers factors in the implementation that may affect Reading Recovery student outcomes in Maine. The report finds that these aspects of Reading Recovery programs are working well in Maine: skilled teachers are making a significant impact on literacy learning; the very lowest children in the first grade are being served; and most Maine schools have a RR team which participates in selecting and monitoring the progress of RR children. It states that analysis of implementation data indicates that Maine schools could improve the operation of their programs in three major areas: provide full coverage for Reading Recovery; begin first-round RR children's programs promptly; and train more special education teachers to use RR procedures. Includes 5 figures and 5 tables of data. A rubric for assessing a school's operation of Reading Recovery is attached. (NKA)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 463 533

A Look at Reading Recovery Programs in Maine Schools

A Supplement to the State of Maine Reading Recovery Report and Evaluation

1997-1998

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

P T Moore

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Prepared by:
Paula Moore, Ed.D., Daria C. Lysy, M.A.,
Rosemary Bamford, Ed.D., Laura Cook, C.A.S.

University of Maine
Center for Early Literacy
College of Education and Human Development
5766 Shibles Hall
Orono, Maine 04469-5766
Tel: (207) 581-2438
Fax: (207) 581-2423

Funding for program evaluation provided by the Maine Department of Education

CS 510 859

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table of Contents

Introduction 3

Executive Summary 4

A Look At Operational Factors

- Level Of Coverage 6
- School Experience With Reading Recovery 7
- Number Of Children Taught And Number Receiving Complete Programs 8
- Why Maine Children Are Still In The Program At The End Of The Year 8
- Starting Date For First-Round Children's Programs 9
- Number Of Children Taught Daily Per Teacher 10
- Number Of Reading Recovery Lessons Per Week 11
- Effects Of The Winter 1998 Ice Storm 12
- School Decision-Making 13
  - Shared Ownership 13
  - Reading Recovery As A Special Education Pre-Referral Strategy 14
  - Reading Recovery Children Referred To Other Programs 14
  - Reading Recovery Children And Retention 15

A Look At The Teachers

- Other Teaching Roles 17
- Years Teaching Reading Recovery 18
- Impact Of Reading Recovery Teachers Beyond Reading Recovery 19

Summary

- Maine 1997-1998 Implementation Data At A Glance 20
- Maine Reading Recovery Teachers At A Glance 22

Recommendations To Maine Reading Recovery Teams For Improving Program Operation 23

Rubric For Self-Evaluating Your School's Operation Of Reading Recovery 24

Introduction

The yearly program evaluation of Reading Recovery typically assesses only student outcomes; it does not probe issues that affect the operation of Reading Recovery at the school level. However, operational factors, such as amount of Reading Recovery teacher coverage, number of children taught, and number of lessons directly affect student outcomes. Program evaluation data indicates that student outcomes are maximized only when Reading Recovery is used by the school in the way in which it was designed. In practice, to say that Reading Recovery "works", is to say that the school's operation of the program "works".

In an effort to discover how Maine schools are operating their Reading Recovery programs, Maine Reading Recovery teachers provided information related to school-level implementation. This information was collected on Maine data forms at the end of school year 1997-1998 in conjunction with collection of data for the Ohio scan forms.

Completion of the Maine data forms was optional. However, three fourths of the 346 Maine Reading Recovery teachers, representing all regions of the State, completed the forms. This data creates a very reliable picture of Reading Recovery implementation in Maine. Two types of implementation data were collected:

Teacher Data. Teacher Questionnaires completed by each Reading Recovery teacher assessed individual schools' Reading Recovery programs and covered topics ranging from implementation and selection procedures to interrupted service. The teacher questionnaire also asked professional information regarding teaching experience and the perceived effect of Reading Recovery in the school context.

Student Data. Student Questionnaires were completed by Reading Recovery teachers about Reading Recovery students. The forms included questions about referrals, retention, and reasons for missed lessons.

The goal of this document is to report the information collected on the Maine data forms and to infer factors in our implementation that may affect Reading Recovery student outcomes in Maine. Student outcome data for school year 1997-1998 collected on Ohio data forms are reported in the State Report and Evaluation (April 1999), unless it applied to implementation issues (e.g., number of children taught and start date of lessons). This document begins with an executive summary of the findings, followed by a complete report of the Maine data. At the end of the document are recommendations and a rubric to help schools self-assess their operation of the Reading Recovery program.

Executive Summary

What The Data Tells Us About Reading Recovery Programs In Maine Schools

To say that Reading Recovery "works" is to say that the school's operation of the program "works".

There are many aspects working well with the Maine Reading Recovery programs in schools. We have skilled and dedicated Reading Recovery teachers and Teacher Leaders who are making a significant impact on literacy learning and teaching in Maine; we are serving the very lowest children in the first grade, most of whom come from situations that put them greatly at-risk for failure; and most Maine schools have a Reading Recovery team which participates in selecting and monitoring the progress of Reading Recovery children.

Yet, Maine schools are not achieving exemplary program results. We discontinue only about one half of the children (other states and countries typically discontinue two thirds of the children in the first grade year); we have too many children who do not receive complete programs; and we serve fewer children per teacher than is typical nationally. The analysis of implementation data collected during school year 1997-1998 indicates Maine schools could improve the operation of their programs in three major areas in order to serve children better.

1. **Provide Full Coverage For Reading Recovery**

Schools need to train more Reading Recovery teachers. Only one third of the schools report having enough Reading Recovery teaching time to meet the needs of all the students. Each school must determine the number of children needing help with literacy learning in its first grade. A school has achieved full coverage when there is sufficient Reading Recovery teacher time to serve all children defined as needing the service in the school. Most schools move to full coverage over several years. It is only at the stage of full coverage that Reading Recovery is effective. Then, the number of children needing extra help with reading at upper grades is reduced.

Alternatively, schools could restructure how they use Reading Recovery teacher time if the Reading Recovery teacher serves in a reading/literacy role the other half day. All but a few Maine Reading Recovery teachers work half a day in their Reading Recovery role. The majority of these teachers serve Title I students the other half of their day. The State Title I office brought Reading Recovery to Maine with the hope that it would reduce the numbers of children needing Title I services in the upper grades. However, many schools have not invested in enough Reading Recovery services to make this hope a reality. Instead, these schools provide a little bit of Reading Recovery prevention and a little bit of remediation, spreading the Reading Recovery teacher resource across the total Title I program. As a result, schools and the State Title I program do not get the kind of results promised from Reading Recovery.

2. **Begin First-Round Reading Recovery Children's Programs Promptly**

Schools must begin first-round children's programs much sooner in September. The majority of schools begin Roaming Around The Known with Reading Recovery children during the last week in September or in October. This means that the majority of first-round children do not discontinue until February or March. Consequently, second-round children lose a month of instructional time. The cost effectiveness of the Reading Recovery program is in direct proportion to the number of children the school can serve with complete programs during the year. Also, a typical Reading Recovery teacher in Maine teaches only six or seven children a year. This is less than the eight to ten children typically taught in a year in other states or countries.

As the Maine school year is short, it is critical for Reading Recovery cost-effectiveness that teachers begin the first-round Reading Recovery children's programs during the second week in September, *at the latest*. First-round children must finish their programs by mid January (twenty school calendar weeks) in order for second-round children to get a complete program. Twenty calendar weeks (including Roaming Around the Known) is the upper end of a typical child's Reading Recovery program. Schools using the Reading Recovery teacher to complete the Observation Survey assessment on all students in the first grade during the first few weeks of September are undermining the cost-effectiveness of their Reading Recovery programs.

3. **Train More Special Education Teachers To Use Reading Recovery Procedures**

The Maine data indicated that Reading Recovery students exhibit significant risk factors. Many Maine Reading Recovery children had been retained or were going to be retained, were receiving speech and/or language services, or had been previously referred for special education evaluation. Unfortunately, in Maine, there is only a small percentage of special educators trained to use Reading Recovery procedures.

Many teachers reported that their schools keep children in the Reading Recovery program longer than is cost-effective, because school teams believe Reading Recovery is the best intervention for children having difficulty learning to read. Ideally, Reading Recovery children who have not discontinued but have had twenty weeks in the program would be referred to a special education teacher who could continue the intensive one-on-one Reading Recovery instruction for longer. In schools where this has happened, some children have been able to discontinue special education services in reading by second grade.

A Look At Operational Factors

Well planned implementation determines the success of Reading Recovery. Operational factors include: level of coverage (having enough Reading Recovery resources to meet the needs of the school), a school's experience with the program, number of children taught, number of lessons, and school decision making. This section examines these factors in Maine schools.

Level Of Coverage

Each school must determine the number of children needing help with literacy learning in the first grade. A school has achieved full coverage when there is sufficient Reading Recovery teacher time to serve all children defined as needing the service in the school. Most schools move to full coverage over several years. It is only at the stage of full coverage that Reading Recovery is effective. Then, the number of children needing extra help in reading at upper grades is reduced. Maine Reading Recovery teachers were asked if their school was able to serve all of the children who needed services, and if not, how many children were unable to be served. Figure 1 displays the percentage of children that Reading Recovery teachers reported they were able to serve.

- Only 31% of the teachers reported they were able to serve every child who needed services.
- About one half of the teachers reported they were able to serve at least three-quarters of the children in need. However, some said that not all of these children received a full program.

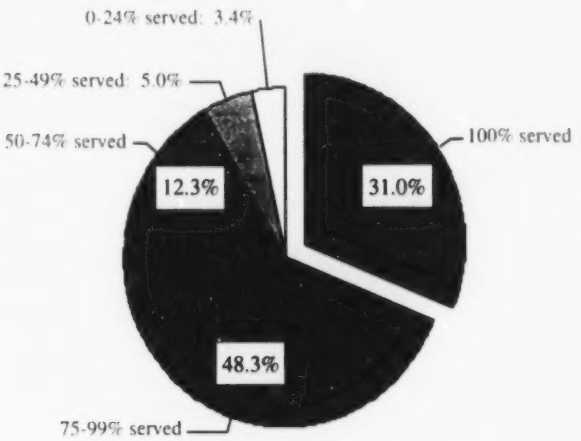

Figure 1. Percentage of teachers who reported they served 0-24%, 25-49%, 50-74%, 75-99%, or 100% of the children in need of Reading Recovery services.

Many teachers wrote comments regarding their ability to serve all students. Following is a sample of these comments:

"I was able to pick up all of the children who needed Reading Recovery, but not complete their programs. Others who were borderline received literacy support 2-5 times a week depending on their need."

"Our second-round students usually don't get a full program. We are not implemented to a level which allows us to carry children over into second grade."

"We have over 70 first graders and I am the only Reading Recovery teacher."

"Many children did not complete the program due to the school year ending."

"We need another Reading Recovery teacher."

School Experience With Reading Recovery

Another factor that affects implementation is a school's experience with the program. Schools with teachers in-training are less likely to meet the needs of all the students than schools which have had the program for several years. Figure 2 depicts the number of teachers who reported that their school is either in its training year of delivering Reading Recovery services, or has delivered services for two, three, four, or over four years.

- Almost three-quarters of the teachers indicated that their schools have provided Reading Recovery services for at least four years.

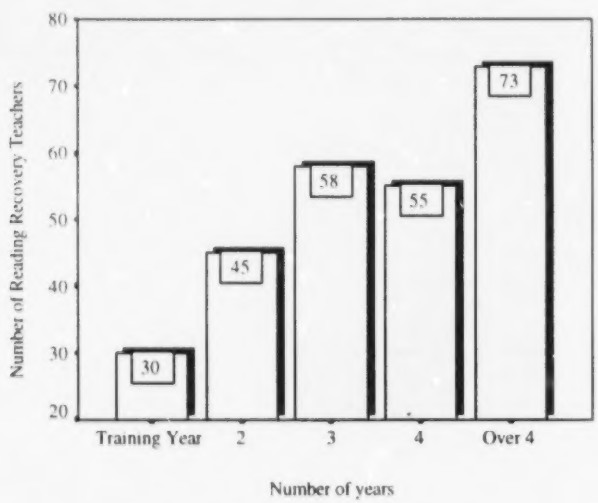

Figure 2. Number of teachers who reported that their schools have from one (training year) to over four years in the Reading Recovery program.

Number Of Children Taught And Number Receiving Complete Programs

The cost effectiveness of the Reading Recovery program is in direct proportion to the number of children the school can serve with complete programs during the year. A typical Reading Recovery teacher in Maine teaches only about six to seven children a year. This is less than the eight to ten children typically taught per year in other states or countries.

In addition, Maine typically has a larger number of Reading Recovery children who do not get complete programs. Unless those children's programs are carried over into the second grade, they will need compensatory support of some kind to keep up with their grade peers. It appears that many Maine schools are not using Reading Recovery to achieve a reduction in the need for compensatory literacy instruction.

Lack of adequate coverage could be the major culprit affecting the number of children taught and the number of children who do not get complete programs in Maine. However, two other factors can also affect the number of children a teacher or a school can serve yearly with complete programs. One factor is the date at which the first-round children's programs begin; the other factor is the number of children taught daily per teacher. Reported in this section are Maine teachers' answers to the question why students are still in the program at the end of the year. Also reported is information about start dates for first-round children's programs and numbers of children taught daily by Maine Reading Recovery teachers.

Why Maine Children Are Still In The Program At The End Of The Year

To find out why Maine children are still in the program at the end of the year, teachers were asked to select among a variety of possible reasons. Figure 3 illustrates this data. Of the 450 still-in-the-program students reported by teachers who completed the Maine questionnaire:

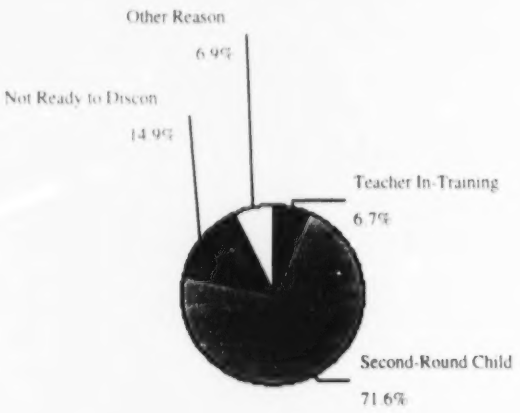

Figure 3. Reason for "still in the program" status at the end of the year.

- 30 were still in the program because their Reading Recovery teacher was in training.
- 322 were second-round children who came into the program too late to finish.
- 67 weren't ready to discontinue and there was no other appropriate program available.
- 31 were still in the program for some other reason (listed below).

Following are some of the "other" reasons noted by teachers for children still in the program at the end of the year:

"There was no lower child to take so we kept this one in the program."

"Parent refused special education as an option."

"Child inconsistently made accelerated progress."

"Interrupted service."

"The student missed two consecutive weeks in middle of program - too many absences."

"The student was only at Text Reading Level 14 in June - very close."

"Teacher and team judgment: we had anticipated the student would accelerate to a level ready to discontinue by end of year."

"Student will need a long-term intervention...student was making slow but steady progress."

"Student was picked up by Reading Recovery while awaiting special education screening."

Starting Date For First-Round Children's Programs

The data above reveals the largest group of still-in-the-program children enters too late in the year to finish the program. As Maine's school year is short, it is critical for Reading Recovery cost-effectiveness that teachers begin the first-round Reading Recovery children's programs during the second week in September, at the latest. First-round children must finish their programs by mid January (twenty school calendar weeks) in order for second-round children to get a complete program. Twenty calendar weeks (including Roaming Around the Known) is the upper end of a typical child's Reading Recovery program.

The Ohio scan form data indicates the date of each Reading Recovery child's first lesson, but this is not the actual start date of the child's program. Reading Recovery children receive ten Roaming Around the Known lessons (two weeks) at the beginning of the program to consolidate old learning; it is possible to estimate the actual start date of children's programs by going back two weeks from the date of the reported first lesson. Following is information from the Ohio data estimating program starting dates in Maine:

- During school year 1997-1998 two thirds of the first-round Reading Recovery Children began their programs (Roaming Around the Known lessons) the third or fourth week in September, or in October.
- Only 363 first-round Reading Recovery children (out of 1693 in the special Maine data) began their Roaming Around the Known Lessons during the second week in September.
- In a few schools, 103 children began their programs before the second week of September.

Number Of Children Taught Daily Per Teacher

Typically, Reading Recovery teachers work in their Reading Recovery role for half the school day. In this three hour period, Reading Recovery teachers are able to serve four or five children. In a majority of Maine schools, Reading Recovery teachers are Title I teachers (see section "A Look at the Teachers"). Unlike classroom teachers or special education teachers, Title I teachers could have more flexibility in their schedules because Title I programs can be organized to focus on early intervention. Therefore, schools can optimize the number of children taught in the school by having the Title I Reading Recovery teacher work with more than four or five children. In an effort to uncover to what extent Maine schools are optimizing the number of children taught daily, teachers were asked to report how many children they taught daily. Table 1 lists the number of teachers who reported teaching an average of one to more than five children daily.

- Most teachers reported that they teach four to five children each day, on average.
- Only 19 teachers out of 261 teachers reported teaching more than five children daily.

Number of children taught daily	Number of teachers
One	5
Two to Three	36
Four to Five	200
More than Five	19
Total	**261**

Table 1. Number of teachers who taught from one to more than five Reading Recovery children per day, on average.

It must be noted that in smaller, rural schools there is often no need for the Reading Recovery teacher to work with four children. When there are only eight or ten first graders, only one or two children may need Reading Recovery. This may explain why a small number of Maine Reading Recovery teachers reported serving less than four students.

Conversely, in some school districts, the Reading Recovery teacher teaches Reading Recovery all day. Therefore, (s)he teaches more than five children a day. Typically, the Reading Recovery

teacher travels between two small schools. In addition, some teachers have found it more productive to teach more Reading Recovery children than to teach literacy groups.

Number Of Reading Recovery Lessons Per Week

Acceleration is the key to a cost-effective operation of the Reading Recovery program. A teacher cannot serve a second-round of children if the first-round does not finish at an accelerated rate. Accelerated progress can only be achieved when Reading Recovery children receive five lessons per week. It is common sense that children can't achieve more learning without adequate lesson time. In addition, Reading Recovery children typically have trouble retaining information or building on past learning. When they have gaps of time between lessons, acceleration is compromised. However, Maine teachers have consistently averaged three lessons per week.

In an effort to discover why Maine teachers and children do not achieve five lessons per week, teachers were asked to report the reasons Reading Recovery children miss lessons. Teachers were provided with categories to choose among on the questionnaire. They could also write in reasons for missed lessons on a blank. Below is the percentage of children who missed lessons in Maine schools during school year 1997-1998 for the categories specified on the questionnaire:

1. Classroom teacher wanted to keep the student in the classroom.
   - 95% of Reading Recovery students missed 0-2 lessons for this reason.
   - 8% missed 3-5 lessons for this reason.
   - 2% missed more than 5 lessons for this reason.

2. Student missed lessons due to a special event.
   - 60% missed 0-2 lessons for special events.
   - 28% missed 3-5 lessons for special events.
   - 10% of the students missed 6-10 lessons for special events.
   - 2% missed over 10 lessons for special events.

3. Student was absent from school.
   - 46% missed 0-2 lessons for this reason.
   - 25% missed 3-5 lessons for this reason.
   - 29% missed over 10 lessons for this reason.

Teachers had the option to write in other reasons for missed lessons. The following is a sample of written responses:

- Reading Recovery teacher absences (illness, continuing contact with Teacher Leaders, colleague visits, conferences, assisting colleagues in discontinuing their students)
- Testing or classroom observation of a student
- Early release days
- Student behavior problems
- Potato harvest break interrupted service for 15-16 days

As many schools were closed for an extended period of time due to the ice storm, this section also includes information about the extent this event affected students' Reading Recovery programs during school year 1997-1998.

Effects Of The Winter 1998 Ice Storm

On the Maine questionnaire, teachers were first asked to select the number of Reading Recovery lessons, per student, the school lost to weather-related situations, including the ice storm in January. Next, teachers were asked if they thought the extended interruptions in instruction due to weather affected their Reading Recovery students' progress.

- Well over half of the teachers reported that their students missed less than six lessons due to weather-related incidents last winter.
- 36% reported that their students missed 6 to 10 Reading Recovery lessons due to weather. Some teachers wrote that make-up days were scheduled, including some on Saturdays, and that many students did not attend make-up lessons
- Many teachers reported that first-round children's programs were extended by a month or so, students discontinued later than anticipated, and consequently, second-round students were picked up too late to receive complete programs.

Teachers indicated the ice storm did indeed have ramifications for the 1997-1998 Reading Recovery program outcomes in Maine. The majority of teachers thought their students' programs were affected as a result of the extended interruptions. In fact, 62.1% answered *'yes'* to the question, 'Do you think these extended interruptions in instruction affected your Reading Recovery students?' While only 37.9% responded *'no'*.

Written responses were collected to find out exactly how Reading Recovery students were affected by the interruptions, and are presented below. They have been grouped into categories of responses.

Emotional strain:

"Not just the absence but the disruption in the normal home routine caused unusual stress."

"When school was back in session the students still did not have electricity. Very emotional time for many. Some families were divided up and lived in different areas."

"Took a while to regain focus and get up to speed."

Consistency of Service:

"Students need daily instruction to support and extend their learning."

"It wasn't the number of days but the timing. There were teacher workshop days and holidays at the same time."

"The ice storm came right after Christmas vacation, so the continuity of daily lessons was impacted more. Consequently, it took longer to discontinue the first-round children."

"It took extra time to get back to where we'd left off."

"I had to drop back two to three levels when they returned."

"Any extended interruption slowed the accelerated progress. Early on in lessons we needed to backtrack to solidify what the children knew."

School Decision-Making

It is imperative to the effectiveness of a Reading Recovery program that many people in the school understand the purposes, rationales and processes of the program. That way, the Reading Recovery teacher and the program are integrated into the total school operation, and early intervention can play an effective role in ensuring student literacy learning results. To this end, school Reading Recovery teams are organized in the schools to make decisions about the use of the Reading Recovery program and selecting or referring Reading Recovery children. This section explores the extent of team ownership in Maine schools and how teams make some decisions about the program. Specifically, this section examines to what extent Reading Recovery serves as a pre-referral strategy to special education, to what other interventions Reading Recovery children are referred, and to what extent school teams are retaining Reading Recovery children at grade level.

Shared Ownership. In order to sustain a quality Reading Recovery implementation, the program must be integrated into the general operations of the total school program. When Reading Recovery "works" in the context of the total school program, teachers, specialists, and the principal share understandings about the *purposes* (e.g., to accelerate the lowest text readers), *rationales* (e.g., why five lessons a week is necessary to achieve acceleration), and *processes* (e.g., student selection) of the program. When Reading Recovery does not 'work' in a school, it is often because the Reading Recovery teacher and the program operate in isolation from other teachers and programs, and the role of *prevention* is not well understood.

Evidence that Reading Recovery is integrated into the total school program is found when school teams exist to make decisions about the Reading Recovery program and the children. Teachers were asked to report who was involved in decision-making regarding Reading Recovery student selection and discontinuing. Reading Recovery teachers were asked to mark all categories that applied. Table 2 displays the results on the next page.

- All the teachers who answered the questionnaire reported that someone else works with them in making Reading Recovery decisions.
- Most school teams include the Reading Recovery teacher, classroom teachers, and administrators.

- Some school teams also include special educators and speech/language therapists
- Almost half of the teachers (47.5%) said that their school had someone else involved in the decision-making process beyond those in the categories above. Qualitative responses indicated a range of other individuals involved in Reading Recovery decision-making in Maine: Title I staff, Teacher Leaders, parents, and guidance counselors.

The above data are heartening, because it suggests a wide range of teachers and professionals in the school are involved in the operation of the Reading Recovery programs. However, this data does not reveal to what extent school teams do understand the purposes, rationales, and processes of the program, or to what extent the role of prevention is understood.

Team Member	Percentage of Responses
Reading Recovery Teachers	99.2
Classroom Teachers	98.9
Administrators	85.4
Speech Therapist	42.5
Special Education	26.1
Other	47.5

Table 2. Team members involved in Reading Recovery decision-making.

Reading Recovery As A Special Education Pre-referral Strategy. When young children have trouble learning in school, it is difficult to tell if they simply lack appropriate prior experience and teaching, or if they have long-term literacy learning needs. One of the positive outcomes of Reading Recovery is that children who do not make progress in the program, with the intensive one-on-one instruction, are positively identified early enough for long term specialist help in literacy. Therefore, schools are maximizing the benefits of Reading Recovery when they use it as a pre-referral strategy for special education literacy services.

Maine Reading Recovery teachers were asked whether or not their school uses Reading Recovery as a special education pre-referral intervention.

- 74% of the Reading Recovery teachers said their school does use special education as a pre-referral strategy.
- 26% said their school does not.

Reading Recovery Students Referred To Other Programs. On the Ohio data forms it is not possible for teachers to indicate to what other kind of programs children may be referred when they do not make satisfactory progress in the Reading Recovery program. Although "referred" is a term used primarily in relation to special education, it could also be that some Maine Reading Recovery children are referred to other types of compensatory services. To probe

the possible services to which Reading Recovery children in Maine may be referred, teachers were asked for the interventions to which students were referred at the end of the program. Figure 4 displays the percentage of each response for the 306 students who were referred to other programs, as reported in the special Maine data collection.

- The largest group of students (62.4%) were referred to special education.
- 19.3% of the children were referred for further Title I service
- 5.9% of the children were retained at grade level.

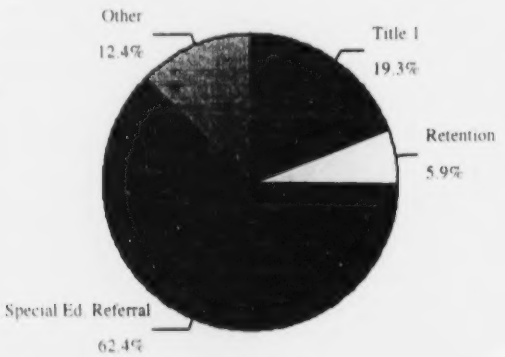

Figure 4. Percentages of Reading Recovery children who were referred to other interventions.

Teachers were asked to comment on why Reading Recovery children were referred. Following is a sample of the reasons for referral:

- Behavioral/emotional difficulties
- Not making accelerated progress
- Parent request
- Student moved
- Speech/language and hearing trouble
- Child put back in Kindergarten
- Too many absences
- Possible special education referral next year
- Student already in special education
- Reading Recovery teacher left school

Reading Recovery Children And Retention. Reading Recovery children are retained at a higher rate than are the general population of first graders. Some are retained prior to Reading Recovery. Some Reading Recovery children, regardless of their end of program status (e.g., discontinued, referred, still in the program), are retained at the end of the first grade year. That is,

even children who have met their school's criteria for discontinuing (i.e., they have a self-extending system and can continue to learn from just the classroom literacy program) are retained at grade level. In an effort to explore the scope of this disheartening trend, Reading Recovery teachers were asked to report on the number of their Reading Recovery children who would be retained and for what reason. Results appear by end-of-program status category in Table 3. Teachers completing the Maine questionnaire reported that 135 out of 1693 Reading Recovery students would be retained at the end of their first grade year.

- 24 discontinued children were retained for social, behavioral, or academic reasons.
- 30 children still in the program were retained for social, behavioral, or academic reasons
- 77 referred children were retained for social, behavioral, or academic reasons.

End of Year Status (N of group)	Social / Behavioral	Academic Ability	Other	Total
Total Referred (N=306)	28	39	10	77
to special education	10	13	3	26
to a different intervention	18	26	7	51
Still in the program (N=450)	12	15	3	30
Discontinued (N=895)	12	9	3	24
Other (N=32)	2	2	0	4
Total	**54**	**65**	**16**	**135**

Table 3. Number of students to be retained for each of the listed reasons.

Other reasons teachers gave for retaining Reading Recovery children are parental request, student was developmentally young, and multiage classroom instruction.

In addition, teachers were asked to specify if a student was retained *prior* to entering the Reading Recovery program. 157 Reading Recovery children had been retained before entering the program.

- 64 children were retained in Kindergarten before Reading Recovery
- 45 children were retained in Transitional First before Reading Recovery
- 12 children were retained in Early Kindergarten before Reading Recovery
- 12 children were retained in First grade before Reading Recovery

Other ways in which 14 Reading Recovery children were retained before entering the program are listed below:

- Kept home an extra year
- Repeated pre-school program
- Half Kindergarten, half first grade last year
- The program ran for two years - pre Kindergarten then Kindergarten

A Look At The Teachers

In the original design of the Reading Recovery program, Reading Recovery teachers were classroom teachers the other half of their school days. This had a major advantage. Reading Recovery teachers often had their own students in the classroom, eliminating the communication problems created when specialists and classroom teachers see children differently, or when they lack understanding of the context for each other's work. In addition, knowledge about early literacy learning and teaching gained in the Reading Recovery training was used by teachers for guided and shared reading groups in the classroom.

In addition, in the original design of the program, Reading Recovery teachers seldom stayed longer than four years in the Reading Recovery position, and members of the school teams rotated into and out of the Reading Recovery position. This had another major advantage. Many teachers in the New Zealand Junior School team benefited from the Reading Recovery training, and school teams were never without a Reading Recovery teacher if the current one left the school.

However, the original Reading Recovery program was designed in New Zealand where compensatory education programs are still rare and where school teams are part of the operation of the schools. It made sense to use classroom teachers and to rotate team members in and out of the Reading Recovery role. The reverse is true in Maine schools; compensatory education teachers abound and school teams are rare. In addition, in most Maine schools, compensatory education and classroom teachers seldom exchange roles, due as much to teacher preference as to contractual barriers.

Therefore, it is not a surprise that the majority of Maine Reading Recovery teachers are compensatory education teachers, and most have been in their roles for a long time. It is unfortunate that more special educators in Maine are not also Reading Recovery teachers. Given the fact that Reading Recovery teachers work with the children most in need in the first grade, it can be expected that a portion of these will require special education services.

This section includes information about the roles Maine's Reading Recovery teachers have during the other half of their instructional day, years they have taught Reading Recovery, and the impact that they have on schools, beyond the children who are directly served by Reading Recovery.

Other Teaching Roles

During school year 1997-1998 there were 46 in-training teachers and about 300 trained teachers currently serving in Reading Recovery roles in Maine schools. The teacher questionnaire included questions about teaching roles and professional experience. Table 4 below displays the percentage of Reading Recovery teachers who reported having the teaching roles listed. Almost all Reading Recovery teachers are funded by Title I during the time they teach Reading Recovery.

- Of 261 teachers reporting, the majority (42.9%) said they are Title I or reading/literacy teachers the other half of their day.

- 30% said they are classroom teachers the other half of their day.
- A small percentage are also special education teachers and two teach bilingual classrooms.

Other Teaching Role	Percentage of Teachers
Reading/Literacy	42.9
Classroom	30.3
Special Education	5.7
Bilingual Classroom	0.8

Table 4. Additional teaching roles of Reading Recovery Teachers.

Years Teaching Reading Recovery

Figure 5 displays the number of teachers who are in their training year, or have from two to over four years experience teaching Reading Recovery. We have a vintage Reading Recovery teaching corps in Maine.

- About half of the teachers have been teaching Reading Recovery for at least four years.

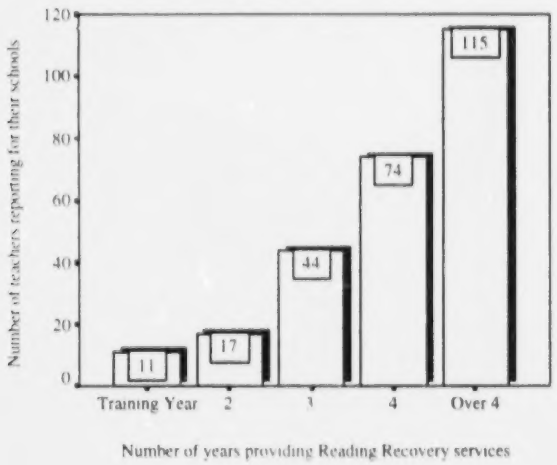

Figure 5. Each bar represents the number of teachers with the designated number of years of experience teaching Reading Recovery.

Impact Of Reading Recovery Teachers Beyond Reading Recovery

Many schools report informally that Reading Recovery teachers have had an impact on school programs beyond Reading Recovery. Often, principals say the Reading Recovery teacher becomes a resource on early literacy assessment and acts as a catalyst in staff development. In an attempt to capture some of the effects Reading Recovery teachers have had on their schools, the Maine data forms asked teachers to check all groups on which they had an impact as a result of their Reading Recovery training. Results appear in Table 5.

- Most Reading Recovery teachers reported that they have had an impact on other classroom teachers in their school, and on the literacy learning of other groups of children as well, beyond Reading Recovery children.

Groups Impacted by RR Teachers	Percentage endorsed
Classroom students	34.1
Literacy group children	56.7
Classroom teachers	92.3
Other	47.9

Table 5. Impact on others as a result of Reading Recovery training.

Almost half of the teachers reporting (47.9%) claimed that their Reading Recovery training has had impact on recipients other than those choices offered in the questionnaire. The following is a list of those "others".

- Parents
- Ed Techs
- Administrators
- Other teachers: pre-schools, upper grades and other schools
- Special education students or teachers
- Reading Consultant or Reading Coordinator
- Doing Workshops/Conferences
- Informing the public about Reading Recovery
- High school mentors
- Volunteers
- Family Coordinator
- Assisting in University of Maine course EEL 531 (Observing Young Learners to Inform Instruction)

Summary

Maine 1997-1998 Implementation Data At A Glance

Level Of Coverage

- Only 31% of the teachers reported that were able to serve every child who needed services.
- About one half of the teachers reported they were able to serve at least three-quarters of the children in need. However, some said that not all of these children received a full program.

School Experience With Reading Recovery

- Almost three-quarters of the teachers indicated their schools have provided Reading Recovery services for at least four years.

Why Maine Children Are Still In The Program At The End Of The School Year

- 30 children were still in the program at the end of the school year because their Reading Recovery teacher was in training.
- 322 were second-round children who came into the program too late to finish by the end of the school year.
- 67 weren't ready to discontinue and there was no other appropriate program available.
- 31 were still in the program for a different reason than those mentioned above.

Number Of Children Taught: Starting Date For First-Round Children

- During school year 1997-1998 two thirds of the first-round Reading Recovery children began their programs (Roaming Around the Known lessons) the third or fourth week in September, or in October.
- Only 363 out of 1693 first-round Reading Recovery children reported in the Maine data began their Roaming Around the Known Lessons during the second week in September.
- In a few schools, 103 children began their programs before the second week of September.

Number Of Children Taught: Children Taught Daily Per Teacher

- Most teachers reported they teach four to five children each day, on average.
- Only 19 teachers out of 261 reported teaching more than five children daily.

Reasons For Missed Lessons In Maine

Classroom teacher wanted to keep the student in the classroom.

- 95% of Reading Recovery students missed 0-2 lessons for this reason.
- 8% missed 3-5 lessons for this reason.
- 2% missed more than 5 lessons for this reason.

Student missed lessons due to a special event.

- 60% missed 0-2 lessons for special events.
- 28% missed 3-5 lessons for special events.
- 10% of the students missed 6-10 lessons for special events.
- 2% missed over 10 lessons for special events.

Student was absent from school.

- 46% missed 0-2 lessons for this reason.

- 25% missed 3-5 lessons for this reason.
- 29% missed over 10 lessons for this reason.

Other reasons for missed lessons.

- Reading Recovery teacher absences (illness, continuing contact with Teacher Leaders, colleague visits, conferences, assisting colleagues in discontinuing their students)
- Testing or classroom observation of a student
- Early release days
- Student behavior problems
- Potato harvest break interrupted service for 15-16 days

Effects Of The Winter 1998 Ice Storm

- Well over half of the teachers reported their students missed less than six lessons due to weather-related incidents last winter.
- 36% reported that their students missed 6 to 10 Reading Recovery lessons due to weather. Some teachers wrote that make-up days were scheduled, including some on Saturdays, and many Reading Recovery students did not attend make-up lessons.
- Many teachers reported children's programs were extended by a month or so and students discontinued later than anticipated. Consequently, second-round students were picked up too late to receive complete programs.

School Decision-Making: Shared Ownership

- All of the teachers who filled out questionnaires reported that someone else works with them in making Reading Recovery decisions.
- Most school teams include the Reading Recovery teacher, classroom teachers, and administrators.
- Some school teams also include special educators and speech/language therapists.
- Almost half of the teachers (47.5%) said that their school had someone else involved in the decision-making process beyond those in the categories above. Qualitative responses indicated a range of other individuals involved in Reading Recovery decision-making in Maine: Title I staff, Teacher Leaders, parents, and guidance counselors.

School Decision-Making: Reading Recovery As A Pre-Referral Strategy

- 74% of the Reading Recovery teachers said Reading Recovery was used as a special education pre-referral strategy in their schools.
- 26% said it was not.

School Decision-Making: Reading Recovery Students Referred To Other Interventions

- The largest group of students (62.4%) were referred to special education.
- 19.3% of the children were referred for further Title I service.
- 5.9% of the children were retained.

School Decision-Making: Why Children Were Referred From Reading Recovery To Another Intervention

- Behavioral/emotional difficulties
- Not making accelerated progress
- Parent request

- Student moved
- Speech/language and hearing trouble
- Child put back in Kindergarten
- Too many absences
- Student already qualified for special education
- Reading Recovery teacher left school

School Decision-Making: Retention Of Reading Recovery Children For Social, Behavioral, Or Academic Reasons

- 24 discontinued children were retained for this reason.
- 30 still-in-the-program children were retained for this reason.
- 77 referred children were retained for this reason.

Maine Reading Recovery Teachers At A Glance

Reading Recovery Teacher Roles

- The majority of Reading Recovery teachers reporting (42.9%) were Title I or Reading/Literacy teachers the other half of their day.
- 30% of Maine's Reading Recovery teachers were classroom teachers the other half of their school days.
- 5.7% of the teachers also served as special educators.

Years of Experience As A Reading Recovery Teacher

- About half of the teachers have been teaching Reading Recovery for at least four years.

Impact Of Reading Recovery Teachers Beyond Reading Recovery

- Most Reading Recovery teachers reported they have had an impact on other classroom teachers in their school, and on the literacy learning of other groups of children as well, beyond Reading Recovery children.
- Almost half of the teachers (47.9%) claimed their Reading Recovery training has had impact on recipients other than those choices offered in the questionnaire. These other responses include:
    - Parents
    - Ed Techs
    - Administrators
    - Other teachers: pre-schools, upper grades and other schools
    - Special Education students or teachers
    - Reading Consultant or Reading Coordinator
    - Doing Workshops/Conferences
    - Informing the public about Reading Recovery
    - High school mentors
    - Volunteers
    - Family Coordinator
    - Assisting in University of Maine course EEL 531 (Observing Young Learners To Inform Instruction)

Recommendations to Maine Reading Recovery Teams for Improving Operation of the Program

1. Complete an assessment of the operation of Reading Recovery in your school using the rubric that follows these recommendations.

2. Determine your need for Reading Recovery resources to achieve full coverage of all the children who need Reading Recovery services. Create a plan to work toward full coverage by:
   - Training more Reading Recovery teachers, or
   - By using current Reading Recovery teachers to work with more children per day.

3. Begin first-round Reading Recovery children's programs by the second week in September, at the latest. Some schools take the week before school starts to observe the children. Paying some teachers for an extra week to do Observation Survey testing is more cost-effective than delaying second-round children's programs.

4. Keep track of how many lessons per week Reading Recovery children in your school receive. Use the team to problem solve ways to achieve five lessons a week. Some Reading Recovery teachers carry five Reading Recovery slots and use one slot each day to give one child a second lesson.

5. Provide Reading Recovery training for a special educator to work with the children who fail to accelerate within twenty weeks but who need the type of close teaching and observation found in Reading Recovery.

6. Provide Reading Recovery training for at least one other teacher in the school to ensure the program continues, should the current Reading Recovery teacher leave unexpectedly.

7. If your Reading Recovery teacher is Title I, and you have not achieved full coverage for all the children who need Reading Recovery services, examine to what extent the Title I Reading Recovery teacher's time could be refocused on prevention, rather than remediation. Some schools use the Title I Reading Recovery teacher to serve seven Reading Recovery children in the fall. Then (s)he provides remedial services to other grades as the first graders discontinue.

Notes from Kathryn Manning, State Title I Office:

- Staff development to support your Reading Recovery program or the development of Reading Recovery teachers is a legitimate Title I expenditure.

- It is the responsibility of the LEA and the school to identify at-risk students from state or local sources. Once eligible children are identified, Part A funds may be used to identify those most in need or to identify their specific educational needs.

Rubric For Assessing A School's Operation Of Reading Recovery
March 1999

Factors to Consider	Cost-effective	Fair	Poor
Adherence To Principles In The Child's Program	• Selects the lowest children • Achieves 5 lessons per week • Reading Recovery (RR) is something extra	• Selects the lowest with some exclusions • Achieves 3 lessons a week • RR serves as something extra	• Selects children from 40% of achievement • Achieves less than three lessons per week • RR is the child's only reading program
Level Of Coverage	• 100% of first graders needing help are served • Children's programs are carried over into second grade if needed • A special educator is RR trained and picks up childrenwho do not accelerate in 20 weeks	• 1-2 children needing help remain at the end of the year who do not get RR • 1-2 children's programs are carried over into second grade • No special educator trained	• 3 or more children needing help remain at the end of the year • No children carried over • No special educator trained
Efficiency Of Operation	• First-round children's programs begin second week of September • Second-round children by January • RR teacher serves 8 or more children over the year	• First-round children's programs begin third week of September • Second-round children picked up in February • RR teacher serves 7 children over the year	• First-round children's program begin fourth week of Sept. or later • Second-round children picked up in March • RR teacher serves 6 children over the year
Use of Data	• Collects & consistently uses program evaluation data to make changes • Monitors RR children's progress through fourth grade • Presents data to school board & parents each year • Data show consistent improvement in RR operation	• Collects data but does not use it consistently to make changes • Monitors RR progress of children through second grade only • Does not present program evaluation data to school board or parents • Data show some improvement	• Does collect RR data but only for Teacher Leader • Monitors RR children's progress through end of first grade only • Does not present data to school board or parents • No change in data from year to year

School Team	• School team includes wide range of members, including specialists & principal • School team meets regularly to evaluate the operation of the program & children's progress and to problem solve	• School team includes just first grade teacher, RR teacher, & principal • School team evaluates progress of children but not the operation of the program	• No school team, RR teacher makes all the decisions
Role Of Reading Recovery Is Understood	• RR is only one of several interventions a school can use to ensure children achieve learning results • RR is used as a pre-referral strategy • RR & Sp. Ed programs work together	• RR replaces Title I services • RR is sometimes used as a pre-referral strategy • RR & Sp. Ed program do not communicate	• RR replaces Title I • RR is never used as a pre-referral strategy • RR & Sp. Ed programs do not communicate
Implementation Plan	• The school has an explicit plan for the development & operation of RR and this plan has been communicated to all levels in the district	• The school has a plan for RR's operation, but it is not explicit to others	• No plan for the operation of RR in the total school program
Reading Recovery Teacher Selection & On-Going Reading Recovery Teacher Development	• RR teacher has been part of the senior staff & is fully certified • RR teacher has primary classroom experience • RR teacher attends continuing contact • RR teacher makes colleague visits outside the school • RR teacher attends all RR conferences & institutes in Maine & the northeast	• RR teacher has experience with primary children, but not in the classroom • RR teacher attends continuing contact • RR teacher makes colleague visits only inside the school or district • RR teacher occasionally attends conferences & institutes in Maine	• RR teacher is fully certified but was recruited from outside or is paid as ed. tech. • RR teacher has no experience with primary children • RR teacher attends continuing contact • RR teacher makes no colleague visits • RR teacher attends no conferences or institutes

Administrative Support	• Principal & superintendent understand the program • Principal is active in team decision-making • Superintendent & principal provide financial support as needed • Principal works with parents, if needed • Superintendent & principal can defend RR to the School Board & to other administrators	• Principal understands the program, but superintendent is distant • Principal sits in on team meetings but does not participate actively in decisions • Some financial support for RR teacher & materials is provided • Principal sometimes works with parents	• Principal & superintendent view RR as a Title I program only • Principal rarely attends team meetings • Principal does not support RR teacher financially • Title I, rather than the principal & superintendent, defends the program to school board • Principal does not work with RR children's parents if needed

©1999 Paula Moore & Laura Cook, Center for Early Literacy, University of Maine